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RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0059  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0066  
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEPGDA/USEUCOM JIC VAHINGEN GE  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000030

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR AF/W (SILSKI)  
STATE FOR INR/AA  
USDOC FOR BUREAU OF THE CENSUS: OFFICE OF AFRICA - NIGERIA  
DESK  
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR  
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH  
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [NI](#) [CENSUS](#)  
SUBJECT: LAGOS INCREDULOUS OVER CENSUS RESULTS

REF: A. ABUJA 44 B. 05 LAGOS 435 C. 05 LAGOS 1293

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: For a moment shunting aside the partisan bickering of the election season, Lagosians of all stripes and religious persuasions collectively uttered a hue and cry at the recent national census results. They reject the notion that Kano State is more populous than Lagos. Feeling is widespread that the census was a political device to assuage Northern anxiety about atrophy of its political muscle. Most Lagosians estimated their population to be 16-18 million, thus being pegged at 9 million is quite a low blow. Although denigrating the census results, many people are using them to argue that the near parity in population between Lagos and Kano is not reflected in the apportionment of National Assembly seats and local government councils. Lagos has significantly less of both. Now there is a cry to address this imbalance. Unlikely is that prospect prior to the election. End summary.

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Census Runs Counter to Common Sense,  
Demographic Trends  
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¶2. (U) Ayo Obe, a human rights attorney, described the census results as a political artifice disguised as an exercise in demographics. In a conversation with the Consul General, Obe ridiculed the idea that the North should have three of Nigeria's four most populous states. She was particularly bemused that Katsina would be seen as heavily populated, quipping that, "Apparently Nigerians are migrating to the edge of the Sahara". A leading figure in the Lagos muslim community characterized the result as a travesty to mathematics.

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Technical Flaws Allow Overcounting in the North  
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13. (SBU) Ngozi Nkwo, a southerner who was a counter in the 1991 census, told Poloff flaws in counting techniques skewed the results from the North. Nkwo commented that in the North, male census takers were not allowed into homes to count females. Since there were only a few female counters, census takers had no choice but to accept the number of females given by the head of household. (Note: This is a rationale widely accepted in the South to explain the North's advantage. End note)

14. (U) Nevertheless, Some southerners defended the census as a rough head count, which though flawed was still useful. Political Science Professor Adeolu Durotoye of the University of Ibadan called the results "very close to reality" and better than the 1991 effort.

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Lagos State Government Preparing a Response...  
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15. (C) Chief Press Secretary for the Lagos State Governor Kehinde Bamgbetan (protect) told us that Lagos had not issued an official statement on the census because the governor's office was still preparing its response. Anticipating this outcome to the federal exercise, Lagos State had also conducted its own census, Bamgbetan noted. The State hired its own counters and Governor Bola Tinubu personally directed the effort, which took place at the same time as the official census. When the National Census declared an end to its exercise, Lagos State requested uncounted residents to remain indoors for an additional two days.

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16. (C) Bamgbetan confided to Polspec that the State census recorded a population of 21 million. Because of the vast discrepancy between the State and Federal Government (FG) census results (over 11 million) the Governor's office is preparing a comprehensive and detailed response to the national census results. (The Lagos State figure is significantly higher than the Lagos population estimate of 12 to 15 million given by the UN and NGOs.) Bamgbetan said Lagos was considering several options, which includes either challenging the Federal census numbers in court or addressing the issue to the National Assembly.

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...As Politicians Are Already in the Fray  
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17. (U) While acknowledging that census numbers are biased against Lagos, National Assembly Senators Olorunnimbe Mamora of Lagos and Victor Oyofe of Edo called for a constitutional amendment to adjust local, state, and national representation to reflect the census. Mamora, noting that currently Lagos has 26 national representatives to Kano's 34, called for a proportional readjustment to reflect Lagos's near parity with Kano. Mamora also called for an increase in Lagos's current number of 20 local government councils.

18. (SBU) Professor Adeolu Durotoye of the University of Ibadan was doubtful of the success of any legislative effort to amend the constitution, calling the effort politically explosive. Citing prior disputes between the FG and Lagos State regarding the number of local government councils to which Lagos was entitled (refs B and C), Durotoye did not see a People's Democratic Party-controlled National Assembly adjusting Lagos's representation, a move which would benefit Lagos Governor Tinubu and his party, the Action Congress (AC). Furthermore, Durotoye saw little chance a court would accept as evidence the unauthorized count conducted by the Lagos government. Durotoye noted the political reality is

that the census results protect and justify northern control of the country as well as a significant distribution of Nigeria's wealth from the more productive South to the economically stagnant North. (Note: A report released January 9 by the Stakeholders Economic Forum listed ten Northern States as Nigeria's poorest states. End note)

19. (SBU) Comment: The census results confirmed the belief by many Lagosians that the count was unfairly tipped against them, despite demographic trends that have swelled the State and city's numbers and burdened housing, transportation, water, and other services. The results giving a majority of the population to the North seem to Lagosians to reflect a political rather than a demographic reality. Given that one of President Obasanjo's mordant critics is Governor Tinubu and that Lagos State is currently controlled by a rival party to the PDP, the odds that the federal government would do something to salve the State's bruised feelings are less than the chances of finding an average Lagosian who would agree with the census figure. End comment.

BROWNE